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March 18, 2008

Mr. Corbin Newman
Regional Forester
U.S. Forest Service
Region 3, Regional Office
Office of the Regional Forester
333 Broadway SE
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Mr. Newman:

Last week the U.S. Forest Service released a notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Rosemont Copper Project in the Coronado National Forest. Your agency announced the details for three public meetings to be held this week. I am deeply concerned that residents, community groups, public health experts and elected officials were given less than seven days notice of the start of the scoping process for the Environmental Impact Statement. I am also concerned that the comment period is limited to a mere 30 days.

The proposed Rosemont Project is entirely located in Arizona's 8th Congressional District. I am troubled by the potential environmental impacts of this mine on the Santa Rita Mountains. The mine could result in water, air and noise pollution, destruction of wildlife habitats and extreme traffic hazards. All of these are possible outcomes if this proposed mine plan is approved by your agency.

While the mine would be on land owned by the company, the operation requires the use of more than 3,000 acres of surrounding national forest land for waste tailings and other operational needs. The likely impact on human health and the environment is significant. Therefore, your agency has an obligation to approach the Coronado National Forest project carefully and with a high degree of sensitivity to residents of the surrounding communities.

During the scoping process, sufficient public input must be allowed to fully identify the significant issues related to this action. To address public concerns that those impacts will be sufficiently identified, I request the following changes to the scoping process:

- 1) At least three additional public informational meetings in Sahuarita, Sonoita, and Central Tucson;
- 2) An extension of the comment period deadline to at least 120 days; and
- 3) Additional public meetings after the informational meetings to include community groups and leaders in developing the scope of the EIS.

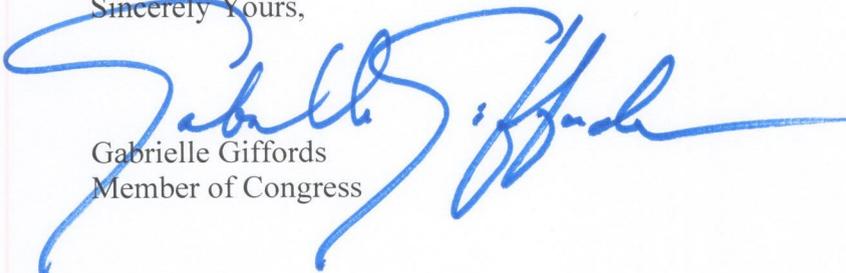
In the NEPA process, I understand that a “cooperating agency” includes any agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to the environmental impacts of a proposal. I would like to ensure that any appropriate state, local, or tribal agency potentially affected by this proposal be invited to participate in the NEPA process.

I am particularly concerned that the appropriate state, local, and tribal agencies be identified and invited to participate in the scoping process. Specifically, I want to ensure that the U.S. Forest Service invites the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the Arizona State Office of Historic Preservation to participate. Further, to ensure that the impacted community is fully aware of any developments associated with this action, I request that elected representatives from affected towns such as Sahuarita, Green Valley, Sonoita, Patagonia and Vail be notified of any additional public meetings or the availability of any analyses related to the NEPA process.

I would appreciate your prompt reply to this request. I can be reached in my Tucson office at (520) 881-3588.

Thank you for seriously considering my requests.

Sincerely Yours,



Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress